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Learning Enhancement and Community Building
Among Class Members Through Electronic Communications

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Paper prepared for the Bush Faculty Development Conference

Celebrating Collaboration:

The Results of Teaching and Learning Together

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Introduction

In recent months both *Newsweek* (Live wires, 1993) and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Internet's vast, 1993) have carried stories about the explosion of electronic communications in America. We are undeniably in the midst of an educational revolution, the essence of which is captured in the title of an article published in the *Chronicle* in 1992: "Huge Computer Network Quickens Pace of Academic Exchange and Collaboration." In a parallel development, advances in information technology have created innumerable possibilities for course enrichment and the building of teaching-learning communities that transcend the physical boundaries of the college classroom. The purpose of this paper is to describe the implementation of electronic communications technology in undergraduate courses.

Background Information

Computer conferencing, also known as "electronic conferencing" and "computer-based text messaging" is defined by Bialkowski (1990) as "a communications and information-management tool that allows groups of people to exchange ideas without the barriers distance can impose" (p. 40). Although the technology for computer conferencing has been in existence since the 1970s its advent in education is really a product of the 1990s.

During the past two years computer conferencing has grown in leaps and bounds at the College of Saint Benedict (CSB) and Saint John's University (SJU), two private,

Benedictine liberal arts colleges in central Minnesota with a joint enrollment of 3,600 and a faculty of approximately 260. Given that these two coordinate colleges are about 6 miles apart, the benefits of computer conferencing in facilitating communication are potentially of great significance.

Since 1992 I have used information technology in general, and computer conferencing in particular, to enhance teaching and learning in my psychology course at CSB/SJU, primarily as a supplement to lectures and class discussions, to implement homework assignments, to facilitate the writing process in writing-intensive courses, and to conduct course evaluations. One unexpected advantage of computer conferencing has been the increase in participation rates of students who tend to be reticent in face-to-face interactions in the traditional classroom environment. As stated by Judy Olson, professor of computer and information systems and psychology at the business school of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, "people who are normally shy tend to be more aggressive, and speak up and contribute where they otherwise might not" (LaPlante, 1993, p. 118).

Technical Specifications

The computer program used at CSB/SJU, VAX Notes, is described as follows in the documentation provided with the software (VAX Notes version 2.1) by Digital Equipment Corporation:

VAX Notes is a computer-mediated conferencing system that lets you conduct online conferences or meetings. Using VAX Notes, you can communicate conveniently and economically with people in different geographic locations. Anyone connected to the system can participate. . . .

The program runs on a Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) VAX 4000-300 computer with 64 MB of memory and 5 GB of total disk storage with simple American National Standards Institute (ANSI) terminals (VT100 or VT200 character terminals) or under the DEC Windows environment with networked PCs.

The operating system is VAX-VMS version 5.5-2. Cost of the software (media and documentation) is about \$525. Academic institutions receive a free license to use their software.

We currently have 145 conferences (mostly for classes, though some for committee work) using about 40 MB of disk space; however, storage requirements will grow throughout the semester as more posts are added to the existing conferences. The estimated number of VAX Notes users at CSB/SJU is approximately 2000, with some users on two or more conferences. Other "conferencing" systems will accomplish the same objectives as VAX Notes. Lotus Notes is one such alternative available for networked PCs. The technology required for implementing the teaching methods explicated in this paper is already in place at practically all four-year colleges and most two-year colleges.

Suggestions for Implementation

Training of Users

It goes without saying that students cannot be expected to use the full potential of computer conferencing technology without appropriate training. I schedule one full class period for each of my courses during the first week of every semester for an intensive computer workshop in the use of

computer conferencing and electronic mail (e-mail). During this workshop I cover the following areas:

1. logging on and off;
2. using e-mail to receive, read, reply, write, manage, and extract or print messages;
3. using VAX Notes to read, reply to, post, and extract or print notes; and
4. miscellaneous computer uses such as using Internet and accessing the online library catalog.

Experience has shown that it is helpful to have a trained consultant on hand to provide expert assistance. A good instructor-student ratio for first-year students is 1:10; in upper-division courses the ratio is not critical as there are usually enough experienced students to permit pairing up of computer-literate students and novices.

Students who need additional help are referred to regularly scheduled training sessions offered by Computing Services throughout the semester, or given individual help. Most students, however, manage to cope on their own after a single training session; additional assistance is typically obtained from more experienced peers or consultants in the public access areas as and when required.

Tailoring Computer Conferencing to Specific Needs

Computer conferencing should be tailored to the needs and goals of the course. In Introduction to Psychology, for example, VAX Notes is used primarily to assign homework (for submission by e-mail) and to distribute vital course

information. In an upper-division, writing-intensive course such as Group Dynamics, VAX Notes is used primarily as an extension of in-class discussion of course related topics, as a medium for presenting supplementary lecture material or clarifying difficult concepts, and to facilitate the writing process. In the beginning-level course, the focus is primarily on preparing students for classes, whereas in the more advanced course there is more emphasis on enrichment activities following in-class coverage of course content.

Facilitating Computer Conferences

Having set up a conference and trained the users, successful computer conferencing does not just "happen." The process requires a facilitator or moderator "to put the dialogue back on course when it's gone off track and to periodically summarize the proceedings. . . . [or] asking a provocative question or prodding participants to elaborate on incomplete thoughts" (Bialkowski, 1990, p. 42). Conferences also require some "housekeeping"; outdated information needs to be deleted and completed or inactive discussions extracted and electronically archived. Intensive use of computer conferencing can be quite time consuming. With approximately 75 students on three separate conferences, I spend at least 2 hours per day in electronic communication and related activities. The Introduction to Psychology course also has a student assistant who moderates the electronic homework component of the course, which requires several hours per week.

Grading Issues

I avoid grading student participation in computer conferences. This is not, of course the case with computer-mediated homework where the conference serves merely as an electronic bulletin board for posting assignments and submission deadlines, or writing requirements for term papers where students are required to post preliminary work on their papers and comment on the work of their peers.

Practical Application

Information Dissemination

Electronic mail (one-to-one or by means of multi-member distribution list) and standard computer conferences utilized as electronic bulletin boards provide important communication channels. Used as a bulletin board, VAX Notes functions in many respects as a newsletter.

Course updates are typically posted on the electronic bulletin board, as are announcements regarding class activities (e.g., assignments or tests), lecture outlines, and study guides. Indeed, "hard copy" handouts have been reduced, resulting in some measure of departmental savings in expendable supplies and duplicating costs (see also Appendix A). Students are required to submit special requests (e.g., permission to be absent from class, petition for make-up exams, re-grading of papers, or extension of deadlines) by e-mail.

Examples of information dissemination on electronic bulletin boards are provided as Appendix B.

Electronic Discussion

If not its most significant application, out-of-class discussion on VAX Notes is certainly the epitome of computer conferencing. In my courses, discussions are frequently organized around *focus topics* selected for a particular semester. Students are required to generate and respond to discussions in which they apply course content to the focus topic (currently memory and memory recovery/construction in Introduction to Psychology; determinants of aggression and violence in Personality; determinants of mob violence in Group Dynamics).

An example of a moderated out-of-class electronic discussion is provided as Appendix C.

Computer-Mediated Homework Assignments

Since the Spring of 1993 almost all homework assignments in my Introduction to Psychology class have been conducted electronically. Pre-class assignments for each module of the course are developed in collaboration with a teaching assistant and posted on VAX Notes. Students submit their homework to the student assistant by e-mail. Though students sometimes find this course component frustrating at first, most students eventually discover the value of this approach; in fact, the acquisition of computer skills is consistently rated by students as one of the most positive aspects of the course.

A related application is the so-called "advanced track" in my section of Introduction to Psychology, where students independently study assigned articles from *Annual Editions: Psychology 1993/94* (copyright 1993 by Dushkin Publishers, Guilford, CT) and submit reviews in standard format for each article by e-mail. Reading assignments are posted on VAX Notes; article reviews are submitted to a distribution list consisting of the instructor, student assistant, and all students on the advanced track (or "fast track" as some students like to call it). This stimulates further electronic discussion among members of this distribution list. Discussions of general interest are cross-posted to the computer conference for the benefit of those students not participating in the "advanced track."

Similarly, in Personality, students desiring course distinction (an "A") are required to read independently four original books by personality theorists studied in the course. The required book reviews are posted (anonymously, if desired) to VAX Notes for the benefit of students not opting for course distinction, thus generating further class discussion and debate.

An example of a computer-mediated homework assignment developed in collaboration with a teaching assistant is provided as Appendix D. Additional computer applications are described by Tom Creed in Appendix A with reference to "virtual member" BFSKINNER.

Computer-Assisted Writing Process

In my two writing-intensive courses, both of which require documented term papers, the first phase in the writing process is the submission of a preliminary topic and prospectus to VAX Notes for peer review and comment, forming the basis for the subsequent "hard copy" formal term paper proposal. In addition, students have the opportunity to use the Internet as a resource for information gathering.

Recently, I have started posting drafts of articles written for the campus newspaper on electronic bulletin boards for open review by students (see Appendix C). Establishing a collaborative community of scholars by inviting critique from students and incorporating useful suggestions in the final manuscript has been, for me, the pinnacle of computer conferencing — the point where innovation became, in essence, simply a new medium for a classic tradition.

An example of a computer-assisted phase in the writing process is provided as Appendix E (see also Appendix C).

Online Course Evaluation

VAX Notes permits the use of anonymous postings, where users log in under a "dummy" username. I currently have two anonymous online course evaluations, JUSTICE and BRUTUS. This system, which is still being used only on an experimental basis has two major drawbacks: it is too reactive, permitting students to vent anger or frustration on the spur of the moment, and it has the potential for abuse

in that there is little control over unintended uses for the facility, including obscenity or harassment. A more secure innovation is described by Tom Creed in Appendix A with reference to "virtual member" IPAVLOV.

Conclusion

In my opinion, computer-mediated teaching and learning enhancement as outlined in this paper embodies precisely that which draws many of our students to these institutions in the first place: individual attention, easy access to faculty, and a sense of community. Yet, the beauty of this technology is that it is transferable to large universities, where — with the help of graduate teaching assistants — similar levels of learning enhancement and community building among class members can be achieved through electronic communication.

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APPENDIX A

Computer-Mediated Assignments, Discussion, and Anonymous Feedback

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My class on Conditioning and Learning is now mostly paperless — students E-mail me their assignments, discuss topics on an electronic bulletin board, and provide anonymous feedback. Two small tips to improve the system: My class has two virtual members, BFSKINNER and IPAVLOV, each serving different functions.

My students E-mail their assignments to BFSKINNER rather than me. The advantage is that their assignments don't get mixed in with all the rest of my E-mail. The only mail BFSKINNER gets is my students' assignments, so I now where they are, and since there's nothing else in his account, it's easy to find my students' work. As a further suggestion, I EXTRACT their assignments with a uniform notation — their initials, the assignment, and as an extension, the semester. For example, a file named TLC2.S94 would be the second study guide of the current semester from a student whose initials are TLC. By using the '%' wildcard, I can combine files that have something in common. For example, if I want to E-mail the complete set of study guides #2, I would CREATE a file called SG2.S94, and APPEND all %%2.S94 files into it. At the end of the semester, if I want a file of all of one student's work, I would create a file ALL-TLC.S94 and append all TLC*.S94 files.

IPAVLOV plays a very different role in my class. Thanks to the near brilliance of Network Operations Manager John Muggli, IPAVLOV has a single role in life — to provide me with anonymous feedback from my students, a task that is somewhat difficult electronically since everything we send is tagged with our names. IPAVLOV is set up so that, if a student types IPAVLOV name at the 'USERNAME:' prompt, no password is needed, and they are automatically thrown into the text editor for MAIL. After they have finished writing what they have to say, they close the file (pressing <F10> or <CTRL>Z), it is automatically sent to me, and the account is closed. This assures anonymity (anyone can log on as IPAVLOV and there is no way to trace who has done so), yet protects against abuse (e.g., sending someone a threatening note [other than me!]) since IPAVLOV can do only one thing — send me a message.

APPENDIX B₁

Information Dissemination by Distribution List

Explanation of sensation and perception, distributed by electronic mail to the entire class in response to a question from a student in Introduction to Psychology.

```
=====
From: TINY::AIMMELMAN      24-SEP-1993 12:55:36.89
To:   @111-F93.DIS
Subj: Question from class member -- Sensation/Perception
```

Someone in class submitted the following question by e-mail:

```
> I am confused about the sensation/perception process.
> It is so simple yet so confusing. What you said in class
> about sensation trying to make sense out of the physical
> stimuli seems to be what perception does when it tries to
> organize it and interpret the stimuli. Maybe an example
> would help.
```

Thanks for the question. First, I need to clear up a misunderstanding. I think I said that PERCEPTION is "making sense" of physical stimuli that impinge upon us, whereas SENSATION refers to the detection (i.e., "picking up") of these stimuli.

As you requested, here's an example, using the FM radio as a metaphor for sensation and perception. Although radio waves are always "out there," for practical purposes they don't exist until we switch on the radio. The point here is that there is no way of "knowing" our environments unless we have suitable, properly functioning equipment to (a) receive signals from the environment, (b) transform/transduce/encode these signals into a useful form, and (c) interpret and organize the meaning of these incoming signals or stimuli.

Sensation begins with the detection of signals from our external or internal environments -- be it light, sound, touch, taste, or smell. In the case of the radio the process of receiving FM signals by means of an antenna is conceptually equivalent to detecting visible light by means of sensory receptor cells (rods and cones) in the retina. Of course, this energy has to be converted into usable form; sensation thus also involves transduction and encoding of sensory stimuli into neural impulses.

Finally, perception: The analogy begins to break down somewhat at this point, but here goes. Just as the radio is able to ultimately organize FM signal into some meaningful form (at least to humans) making it possible for you to listen the radio, perception is the process whereby sensory neural impulses are organized and interpreted to make them meaningful to us.

APPENDIX B₂

Information Dissemination on Electronic Bulletin Board

<<< SYS\$SYSDEVICE:[NOTES\$LIBRARY]SHADOW.NOTE;1 >>>
-< Personality >-

=====

Note 19.0	Syllabus	2 replies
TINY::AIMMELMAN	5 lines	8-FEB-1994 09:16

Changes in the syllabus and syllabus-related matters will be posted as replies to this topic. Students may post syllabus-related questions as replies to this topic.

Aubrey

=====

Note 19.1	Syllabus	1 of 2
TINY::AIMMELMAN	26 lines	10-FEB-1994 09:22

-< Focus Topic - Group Project >-

Focus Topic: Course Requirements and Performance Evaluation

As stated in the syllabus, "the class schedule is provisional," meaning that minor adjustments will be made as and when necessary. I have decided to make one such adjustment. As noted in the syllabus, 50 points toward your grade for the course will be derived from your participation (primarily discussions on Notes Shadow) in our focus topic of aggression and violence. As a result of my implementation of the self-directed learning process (SDLP), it now seems appropriate to make a the following adjustment: 25 points will be allocated for individual VaxNotes participation; the other 25 points will be derived from a group project. Specifically, your working group is required to compile an integrative summary paper on the focus topic, due upon completion of our coverage of Chapter 17. Specifically, this paper will reflect the efforts of group members in addressing Application 2 on the SDLP Supplement for each chapter.

Although this is not intended to be a major paper that should monopolize the time devoted to this course, it will, nonetheless, test the resources of your group with regard to task division, role allocation, and project coordination. There is no prescribed format; this is a test of your group's scholarship, inventiveness, and synergy.

=====

Note 19.2	Syllabus	2 of 2
TINY::AIMMELMAN	31 lines	13-FEB-1994 12:42

-< Self-Directed Learning Process >-

It is stated in the syllabus, under Instructional Activities, that

Pre-class assignments will be designed for approximately 15 of the 18 textbook chapters. These assignments, to be posted on our electronic bulletin board, Notes Shadow. . . . <TRUNCATED>

APPENDIX C

Moderated Electronic Discussion/Open Manuscript Review

=====

Note 45.0	Racism Draft: Please Comment	14 replies
TINY::AIMMELMAN	50 lines	19-NOV-1993 12:47

What follows is the first draft of a letter to the editor of the SJU Record in response to a current campus controversy. Your comments and criticism will be helpful in subsequent revisions.

Racism More Than Private Belief

Aubrey Immelman

In its November 4 article, "Senate Calls for Severe. . . .<TEXT TRUNCATED>

=====

Note 45.1	Racism Draft: Please Comment	1 of 14
TINY::<username>	8 lines	19-NOV-1993 16:20

-< 45.1 >-

Aubrey,

This outline of racism or to be put in your terms, group antagonism, is a very clear and precise description of what you feel needs to be changed in order to eliminate behaviors, stereotypes, and affects. Perhaps what you could add to this piece could be examples on how we could eliminate it in younger children. Personally, I think it should be incorporated into school programs starting with preschool. I think that is what Jane Elliot was suggesting! Jenny

=====

Note 45.2	Racism Draft: Please Comment	2 of 14
TINY::<username>	18 lines	21-NOV-1993 20:49

-< Racism or not? >-

Aubrey,

In reply to your note on racism or group antagonism I think this is an extremely important, but touchy subject. Though it is very true that racism occurs there are many different levels of it and it can be perceived in many different ways. I think any form of racism or discrimination is terrible, but it seems that often times it is hard to depict if that is really what is going on in a given situation.

It seems that many times people mistake actions or verbal content as racist when that is really not the case. Sometimes people look so hard for it they can find it almost everywhere. So where do we draw the line? Who actually defines what is racist or not? What one person perceives as racist, another just perceives it as an action or attitude against "another" person. It's so easy to prove discrimination or prejudice it seems, but how accurate is the accusation to the actual situation?

This is just something that has always bothered me about this issue and I was wondering if there was a way to clear it up! Melissa

```
=====
Note 45.3                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      3 of 14
TINY::AIMMELMAN                      11 lines  22-NOV-1993 12:22
      -< Response to Jenny and Melissa >-
-----
```

Thanks for the comments so far. Jenny -- concerning your comments I'd like to focus my response on a conceptual framework for group antagonism without getting into suggested solutions (many of which flow logically from the model). Melissa -- you raise important issues but I don't have answers to any of them. The conceptual model does not define what is prejudicial, discriminatory, and stereotypical with regard to, respectively, its affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. Thus, I can merely comment that the model is not designed to answer these questions. Please help out, someone.

Aubrey

```
=====
Note 45.4                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      4 of 14
TINY::<username>                      9 lines  23-NOV-1993 15:19
      -< Racism is a Useless Behavior >-
-----
```

I don't know if this will help any but I just had a few thoughts about this. If I was writing an article similar to this one I might talk about xenophobia - the antagonism that is directed to members of an outgroup based on sex, race, age, etc... I might also mention that racism or xenophobia is not something that is instinctual in humans. It is a learned behavior that can easily be avoided if we start to deal with it at an early age. It is not inborn, so therefore learning it is of no value!!

```
=====
Note 45.5                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      5 of 14
TINY::<username>                      6 lines  24-NOV-1993 09:06
      -< racism >-
-----
```

I agree that we need to look at out-group stereotypes. Many people view the situation as horrendous and spread rumors and cause the situation to actually escalate. I believe the whole situation would not have been so built up had out-groups not murmured about it so much. I believe people gossip due to naivety. Until people know more about what is going on with a situation, they should keep their mouth shut.

```
=====
Note 45.6                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      6 of 14
TINY::<username>                      32 lines  28-NOV-1993 20:00
      -< more on prejudice, racism, and discrimination >-
-----
```

Aubrey,

I believe your article makes a lot of sense. Addressing that quote or mis-quote--whatever it may be--will clear up a lot of misconceptions people may have. I think it is sad that many people know so little, or are so wrongly informed, about racism, prejudice, and

discrimination. A lot of the time people don't even realize that there is a problem until something like the Sal's incident occurs.

That event seems to have keyed off a whole series of subsequent happenings (i.e., the demonstration that occurred last week at SJU) and something needs to be done before things really get out of hand. A lot of other people realize this also, but no one seems to know what to do. Perhaps your article will give us a place to start; I think that is what our campuses need.

I liked the comment made about racism not being an instinctive behavior. I believe it is true that we learn to act racist or to participate in discriminatory acts. However, doesn't anyone ever stop to ask why? We are supposedly cognitive and rational beings, so why don't we use these powers to realize that behaviors such as these don't make any sense? What discourages me about this whole line of thinking though, is the fact that even in the animal kingdom behavior like this goes on. Animals that are different are shunned from the group. What is going on here? Are the animals displaying instinctive behavior, or is this a learned behavior? Is this form of behavior any different from the behaviors we display? Perhaps someone with a little more knowledge in animal psychology can shed some light on this for me.

-Dan

```
=====
Note 45.7                               Racism Draft: Please Comment                               7 of 14
TINY::PRSKRBEC                           09:06 -< Response to Dan >-                           53 lines  29-NOV-1993
-----
```

Dan,

I took Animal Behavior as one of my upper division psyc courses and learned a lot about how humans and other animals act -- more importantly, I got some insight as to why.

The biggest theme or reason behind behaviors for any animal is that of self-preservation (Darwin called it natural selection). If something is advantageous for us (as an individual) to engage in for the advancement of ourselves or for our offspring -- we will have a strong incentive to engage in that activity.

One of the reasons that you will tend to see only similar looking males and females of a species mating, is due to something that we would call racism (discrimination based upon the outward characteristics of the physical body).

In this example, the female looks for the strongest and most muscular looking (outwardly) male that she can mate with -- this ensures that her offspring will have a greater chance of survival due to genetic make-up (half of which are hers) and physical protection of the male in some cases. This "discrimination" is necessary for the survival of the species. Evolutionary theorist Charles Darwin dubbed this "survival of the fittest" and the phrase stuck.

While humans have a greater capability of cognitive thought about this matter (at least we assume this is so) we still have some of that instinctual natural selection business going on for us.

I disagree with those who say that racism is "learned." Racism is instinctive from an animal behaviourist's point of view (which I do not claim to be, yet agree with). That is not saying that we have any less responsibility to "unlearn" prejudice. As animals with "higher" cognitive skills than other animals, we have a responsibility to our species to ensure that the human species survives. Therefore, discrimination, after a certain point, is not advantageous to the advancement of an animal species.

Hope you can follow that.

Paul

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=====
Note 45.8                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      8 of 14
TINY::AIMMELMAN                21 lines  30-NOV-1993 09:01
                                -< Response to Dan and Paul (45.6, 45.7) >-
-----
```

As I read Dan's question about whether racism (i.e., outgroup antagonism in the more general sense of the word) is instinctive or learned, the first thought that occurred to me was that we ought to solicit an opinion from someone who has taken the animal behavior course. Imagine my surprise when the very next posting was from Paul, who had actually taken this class.

I'm not too well informed on this topic but I would assume that, to the degree that certain species shun others, such behavior patterns must have some adaptive value in evolutionary terms. Whether we can attribute these behaviors to instinct I simply don't know. In fact, I'm not quite sure what an instinct is; I've heard so-called instinctual behaviors (e.g., bird or fish migrations) referred to as "fixed action patterns," and then, of course, there is the psychoanalytic notion of sexual and aggressive "instincts." Be that as it may, I tend to agree with Paul's point (paraphrased here) that in our heterogeneous society group antagonisms are not in our best interest. With our modern capacity for mutual annihilation we simply cannot afford to let intergroup conflict escalate out of control.

Aubrey

```
=====
Note 45.9                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      9 of 14
TINY::<username>                14 lines  30-NOV-1993 12:31
                                -< racism >-
-----
```

I think it is hard to pin discrimination as either something learned or instinctive because it has been around for such a long time it seems like it would be hard to study. Out of curiosity I looked up the term racism in The Random House College Dictionary and one of the definitions

is: hatred or intolerance for another race or other races. If this is an acceptable definition then is hate an instinctive emotion or a learned one? It seems to me like kids today have become aware of discrimination as a problem and are more accepting of differences among people than people have been in the past. Hopefully things will keep moving in that direction because they will raise their kids to believe that differences are good. I don't know if that made any sense, but I hope I am right!!!

-Maggie

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=====
Note 45.10                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      10 of 14
TINY::PRSKRBEC                  16 lines  30-NOV-1993 15:42
                                -< Reply to 45.9 >-
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Going back to my earlier point, I think that I have to clarify things a bit. I was talking about the "discrimination" (and I use the term in a purely clinical sense) of one set versus another set within a population. HATRED on the other hand, can be seen as the product of repeated "discrimination", misinformation, missing information, stereotyping, social roles, etc. about a SPECIFIC subset of a population. Intolerance is very similar in many respects.

The choices we make daily are based upon the factors that will "benefit" us the most in an evolutionary sense. Hatred is a by-product (in at least one sense) of our striving for our own personal advantage over another person or group of people.

My \$.02

Paul

```
=====
Note 45.11                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      11 of 14
TINY::<username>                20 lines  30-NOV-1993 22:19
                                -< Hate vs Racism >-
-----
```

In response to Paul's last \$.02, it seems that even when you made a distinction between discrimination and hatred, they are both very much linked to prejudice. Hatred seems to me a severe form of prejudice, while the discrimination is the action, as Aubrey has said.

My question is this. One of the things you said that made up hatred was in a sense the competition to survive. While it is obvious this occurs in animals, isn't it this exact same thing that occurs with humans? A racist person always seems to me to be trying to make himself feel better about what he is (or she). The same with a sexist male or female. I am not the biggest female rights activist ever, and I oftentimes think they go overboard in their beliefs.

These people, whether they are against blacks, whites, males, females, or the elderly, seem to feel a need to show that they are "better" than the other group. They feel that they deserve more rights than the others, and somehow this has always come off looking as just a kind of competition. I know this is getting pretty far off the subject, but this is how I often see prejudice and the resulting racism. -- Julie


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Note 45.12                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      12 of 14
TINY::AIMMELMAN                      15 lines    1-DEC-1993 12:58
                                     -< Response to Julie (45.11) >-
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No, Julie -- You are not getting "far off the point." I have a class in a couple of minutes, so I don't have much time to carefully formulate my thoughts, but what you say makes a lot of sense to me. You say that hatred is, to you, a severe form of prejudice. This makes sense because prejudice is the affective/evaluative (emotional) component of outgroup antagonism, as I see it; bingo, perhaps hatred is a more intense negative affect (emotion).

Later on in your comment you note that people seem to be racist to make them feel better about themselves (I'm misparaphrasing here). This is right on the mark, at least from the perspective of Tajfel's social identity theory (specifically, its motivational assumption relating to self-esteem). Gotta run.

Aubrey

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Note 45.14                      Racism Draft: Please Comment                      14 of 14
TINY::AIMMELMAN                      9 lines    11-DEC-1993
16:51
                                     -< Thank you - Much appreciated >-
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Thank you all for your comments. I have found them most helpful and have incorporated some of them in the final piece, which was published in The Record of December 9, 1993 (p. 12).

To those whose suggestions were not taken, many of them were good, but too in-depth for a letter to the editor. I am, of course, saving the information and may well use your input and insights in future writings or in the classroom.

Aubrey

APPENDIX D

Computer-Mediated Homework Assignment

<<< SYSS\$SYSDEVICE:[NOTES\$LIBRARY]PSYC.NOTE;1 >>>
-< Introduction to Psychology >-

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Note 8.0                               Homework for Chapter 3                               No replies
TINY::JMWATTERS                        58 lines   12-FEB-1994 15:04
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Hi Folks,

My name is Julie and I will be the Teaching Intern handling your homework for this semester. I would like it if you would return them to me in the following way: As you have seen, I will send out homework on Notes PSYC. I would like you to get into that note and EXTRACT it to an EVE file (so that you can easily edit it) and send the EVE file on to me. I think Aubrey has demonstrated in your VAX workshop how to do this, but I'll go over it one more time.

Get into homework assignment that I posted on Notes PSYC. This will have a note number; look to see what it is. Then type EXT for extract and press RETURN or ENTER. It will then ask for a filename. You can call it whatever you want--but I highly recommend something that will tell you what it is. I would use PSYC.CH3 and then for later chapters PSYC.CH4, PSYC.CH5, etc. Press RETURN after this and it will ask you which note. Simply enter the note number on the homework assignment (I think the first one will be 8, but check to be sure). Press RETURN and you will have extracted the note.

Now, get out of Notes PSYC by typing and entering EXIT twice and you will be at the \$ prompt. At this, type EVE PSYC.CH3 (or whatever you named your file) and this will pull it up. If it doesn't work, type STI and return. Try EVE PSYC.CH3 again; it should work. Now you're into the file and can type and edit freely. When you're done, press F10 or CONTROL-Z and it will save the file for you and exit you from EVE. To send the message to me, get back into mail and at the MAIL> prompt, write SEND PSYC.CH3 (or your filename) and press RETURN. It will ask you who to send it to. Send it to me: JMWATTERS.

I know this might be fairly simplistic, but nothing is more frustrating than losing a completed assignment. I hope to save you that frustration. If you follow this, you should have no problems. Also, since you can edit in EVE, please delete these instructions before sending it back. Leave the questions in so that I see what it is you're answering. In doing this homework, I want you to know that length is not a factor. Get the facts and explanations down and that's all you need. Don't try to pad an answer to a question you don't know with a bunch of junk; I'll know what you're doing. I didn't mean to ramble on so much, but here it is.

Homework for Chapter 3

1. Briefly describe the function of the following structures or substances in the nervous system:
 - A. Myelin sheath
 - B. Neurotransmitters
2. Briefly describe the function of the following brain structures:
 - A. Cerebellum
 - B. Cerebrum
 - C. Hypothalamus
 - D. Hippocampus
3. Which brain structure also plays a major role in the endocrine system? What is this role?
4. Why do researchers use twin studies and adoption studies when studying the effects of environment vs. heredity? (Think, there's a logical explanation.)

That's it. Remember, length is not the goal, accuracy is. This assignment is due to JMWATTERS by 11:59 PM Wednesday, February 16. Follow the instructions above and everyone will be happy.

Good luck,

Julie

APPENDIX E

Computer-Assisted Writing Process

<<< SYS\$SYSDEVICE:[NOTES\$LIBRARY]DX.NOTE;2 >>>
-< Group Dynamics >-

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Note 31.0	Team, RA, Groupthink, Stand by Me	5 replies
TINY::<username> "Carol"	29 lines	12-NOV-1993 14:30

I was thinking of doing my paper on my high school cross-country team. I would concentrate on the formation and development of the team through all four years that I was a member. I feel that this would be an interesting topic because the team went through several changes in the four years, including changes in membership, leadership, size, and performance. I think that I could zero in on performance, as it changed a great deal within and between years.

I was also thinking of doing something with my experience as a RA. I was a RA on a first-year floor for one year. I would write about the formation of the larger group and the formation of smaller groups on the floor. I could look at task and social oriented groups, comparing the two for differences and similarities. I could also look at the various leadership styles that I used throughout the year.

I was also thinking of doing something with groupthink and the effects it had in the Kennedy administration. I would focus in on the Bay of Pigs situation, but would also look at other historical disasters that were a product of groupthink. I would not concentrate only on the disasters, however, I would also include group situation success stories.

My final idea is to do something with the movie, "Stand by Me." I would look at group structure and how it changed throughout the development of the story.

Any ideas or suggestions more than welcome!

Carol

=====

Note 31.1	Team, RA, Groupthink, Stand by Me	1 of 5
TINY::<username>	13 lines	12-NOV-1993 16:12

-< RA >-

Carol,

Like Jim's idea, I think it would probably be really fun to write about something that you really knew, that you had actually experienced. I also think writing about your cross-country team would be hard just because of the memory factor that other people have discussed. Doing the RA idea sounds most promising to me. It is interesting because you are not coming from an outside point of view, but from one of power. I don't know how much that would change it, but it would be really interesting to

find out about any input from the other students you had worked with. You could then possibly compare the way you saw things to the way they did.

Good luck.

Julie

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Note 31.2                      Team, RA, Groupthink, Stand by Me                2 of 5
TINY::<username>                11 lines  12-NOV-1993 18:07
                                -< RA idea promising >-
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Carol,

In response to your idea of writing on your experiences of being an RA I think that would be your best bet. I think a person can offer more insight if they actually experienced the situation. I think it is a topic with countless possibilities and an interesting one. Just to give you some extra ideas (as if you probably don't have enough) I thought you could also talk about ingroup and outgroup aspects. Also, you were in a power situation and I think it would be interesting to see how you exercised that power and whether or not it was effective.

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Note 31.3                      Team, RA, Groupthink, Stand by Me                3 of 5
TINY::PRSKRBEC                16 lines  13-NOV-1993 19:37
                                -< Reply to 31 >-
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Carol,

My first response to the possible topics that you posted is that you have two very good topics (CC team & RA). I would suggest that you try looking into the CC team option first, mainly because I would imagine that there would be more information available on this type of a structure. This may make your writing go a little smoother. In addition, it may be easier/less complicated to be able to look at, say 4 years as a whole, then look at the individual characteristics that influenced the end result. As they say "Hindsight is 20/20" I think that would apply here.

Good luck. Both are very good ideas, but I like the CC team one better. It seems like you could do more with it.

Paul

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Note 31.4                      Team, RA, Groupthink, Stand by Me          4 of 5
TINY::<username>                7 lines  14-NOV-1993 20:35
                                -< whoa lots of ideas! >-
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Carol,

All of your ideas sound interesting. My opinion would be to either do the Bay of Pigs decision or "Stand by Me." There is probably a lot of information on the Bay of Pigs invasion in relation to groupthink as that seems to be an example used to explain groupthink.

Whatever you choose--good luck!

Melissa

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Note 31.5                      Team, RA, Groupthink, Stand by Me          5 of 5
TINY::AIMMELMAN                16 lines  16-NOV-1993 22:42
                                -< Comments on CC and GT >-
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Carol,

You seem to speak with a strong voice when you talk about the CC team, so I would strongly recommend you select that as your topic. It looks as though you already have some excellent ideas; in fact, your major problem might be delineating/limiting/focusing your analysis.

The problem with the Bay of Pigs is that so much has been written about it that it is difficult to write something original (e.g., a "non-groupthink" analysis). If you want to write about groupthink I would suggest a contemporary case that has not been definitively analyzed, for example, the ATF or FBI raid on David Koresh's Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas.

Enjoy,

Aubrey

APPENDIX F

Protocol for Demonstration Session

Rationale

Recent advances in computer technology have created exciting possibilities for learning enhancement and community building through electronic communication.

Purpose

To demonstrate and offer suggestions for the implementation of computer conferencing for course enrichment and the building of teaching-learning communities that transcend the physical boundaries of the college classroom.

Procedure

1. Overview of computer conferencing.
2. Access computer at St. John's University remotely via TELNET through a link-up to the University of St. Thomas by telephone modem.
3. Online demonstration of computer conferencing, focusing primarily on five features:
 - (a) information dissemination on electronic distribution lists and electronic bulletin boards;
 - (b) group discussions on electronic bulletin boards;
 - (c) computer-mediated homework assignments;
 - (d) computer-assisted writing process; and
 - (e) online course evaluation.

Target Audience

College faculty with little or no experience in the use of computer networks.